THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

I. INTRODUCTION - 1:1

A. Name: חֲבָקֹוק

1. From: פֶּה
   a. To embrace
   b. With last consonant doubled

2. Full Embrace

B. Family

1. Nothing Known

2. Jewish Tradition
   a. Son of the Shunammite Woman
   b. Based on II Kings 4:16 - You shall *embrace* a son

C. Date

1. Appearance of Babylon seen as a work which Israel will wonder with great wonder - 1:1-5

2. Must come before the fall of Nineveh in 612 - After that it would no longer be a surprise

3. After 640 since it is to be done in their lifetime (Your Days)

4. Superscription in 3:1 & 19 - Indicates a time when Levitical Priesthood was in session: Hence during Josiah’s time

5. Conclusion: 640-622 (More likely during latter reign of Josiah - 626-622)
D. Locale

1. Judah
2. Probably Jerusalem - 3:19

E. Historical Setting

1. A time of outward prosperity
2. People terribly corrupted
3. Assyrians no longer an immediate threat but still a strong power
4. Josiah’s reforms were very superficial and no change among the people

F. Major Points

1. Fact of Divine Discipline
2. Sin is Self-Destructive
3. The Just Shall Live by Faith
4. The Justice of God: All injustices will be rectified by the Second Coming
5. Polemic against idolatry

G. New Testament Quotations

1. 1:5 - Acts 13:41
2. 2:4 - Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11
3. 2:3-4 - Hebrews 10:37-38

H. Theme - The just shall live by faith

I. The Burden which Habakkuk the Prophet did see
Exegetical Outline Notes: The Twelve Minor Prophets

1. מֶלֶךְ - Oracle, Heavy Message

2. מִדֵּדֵן - The Prophet: Official Position
   a. Unusual to place the title or office in the heading
   b. May indicate that he was a professional prophet

3. מִדְּבָּר
   a. He visioned
   b. Prophetic vision

4. Uniqueness
   a. Does not prophecy to the nation and people but speaks to God alone
   b. Not concerned with delivering a message but solving a problem
   c. Imparts God’s message as it came to him in dialogue and not straight discourse
II. THE BURDEN OF HABAKKUK - 1:2 - 2:20

A. The First Dialogue - 1:2-11

1. Habakkuk’s Complaint - 1:2-4

a. First complaint: How long? - 1:2

(1) *O Jehovah: How long shall I cry - And You will not hear?*

(a) Habakkuk has prayed many times over the people’s sin - Especially the sin of violence

(b) But God never seemed to answer

(2) Content: *I cry unto You of violence - And You will not save*

(a) Habakkuk’s key issue is violence - *chamas*

(b) Mentions it six times - 1:2, 3, 9; 2:8, 17 (2x)

b. Second complaint: Why? - 1:3

(1) *Why do You show me iniquity - And look upon perverseness?*

(a) To make things worse: Everywhere God leads him - He sees increase of sin

(b) *Iniquity* - Moral evils with tragic result

(c) *Perverseness* - Corruption in all areas of life

(2) *For destruction and violence are before me*

(a) *Destruction – Shod: Greedy and cruel plundering*

(b) *Violence - Chamas: Habakkuk’s chief concern*
(3) *And there is strife* – *Riv:* Law suits

(4) *And contention rises up* - *Madon:* Quarrels; domestic disputes

(5) Shows prophet's sensitivity to sin

c. Result of God's seeming indifference - 1:4

(1) *Therefore* - The result

(a) Lawlessness: *The Law is slacked* - The Law of Moses is not kept

(b) Injustice: *Justice does never go forth* - Justice is perverted

(c) The example: *For the wicked do compass about the righteous* - As seen in the wicked winning over the righteous

(2) *Therefore* - *Justice goes forth perverted*

(a) On one hand - Justice is not meted out

(b) On the other hand - Justice itself is perverted

2. God's Response - 1:5-11

a. The instrument of punishment: The Chaldeans will rise to punish - 1:5-6

(1) Their rise out of obscurity - 1:5

(a) *Behold ye among the nations and look*

i) You will not see them yet

ii) Babylon was not yet a major power

(b) *And wonder marvelously*
i) Alliteration - שַׁכְוַי הַשָּׁקוֹף

ii) But wonder with a great wonder

(c) The reason: For I am working a work in your days - It is going to happen in your lifetime

(d) Which ye will not believe though it be told you

i) If any man had said this: It would never be believed –

ii) Shows Babylon had already been defeated by Assyria

(2) Their rise to power - 1:6

(a) The threat: For lo - I will raise up the Chaldeans - God will be the one to do it –

i) Merodach Baladan (Marodach-Aplaidina II) rebelled against Assyria and rules Babylon in 721-710 BC and 703-702 BC

ii) Nabopolassar became king in 626 BC and founded the dynasty

iii) Nebuchadnezzar (II) conquers Jerusalem in 605 BC

(b) Their attributes: That bitter and hasty nation

i) Bitter - Cruelty to subjugated nations

ii) Hasty - Speed of conquest

(c) Their victories

i) That march through the breadth of the earth - Empire status
ii) To possess dwelling places that are not theirs – Conquest

b. Their description - 1:7-11

(1) Their independence - 1:7

(a) They are terrible and dreadful

(b) Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves

(2) Their speed of conquest - 1:8

(a) Their horses also

   i) Are swifter than leopards

   ii) Are more fierce than the evening wolves

(b) Their horseman press proudly on

(c) Yea their horsemen

   i) Come from afar

   ii) They fly as an eagle that hastes to devour

(3) Their invincibility - 1:9

(a) They come all of them for violence

(b) The set of their faces is forward

(c) They gather captives as the sand

(4) The ease of conquest - 1:10-11a

(a) Yea

   i) He scoffs at kings
ii) Princes are a derision unto him

(b) He derides every stronghold

(c) For he heaps up dust - And takes it

(d) Then shall he sweep by as a wind

(e) Shall pass over and be guilty - He shall transgress and be guilty

(5) Even he - Whose might is his god - 1:11b

(a) This sin will lead to his downfall later

(b) Sin is self-destructive

B. The Second Dialogue - 1:12-2:20

1. Habakkuk’s Complaint - 1:12 - 2:1

a. Habakkuk’s assurance: We shall not die (be destroyed) - 1:12

(1) Reasons

(a) Everlasting: Are you not from everlasting, Oh Jehovah –

(b) Jehovah has always been Israel’s God

i) My God

ii) My Holy One

(c) The Holy One: God’s holiness - Not to break promises

(2) Recognition of the place of Babylon in God’s plan

(a) O Jehovah: You have ordained him for judgment - To punish sin
(b) And You O Rock: Have established him for correction - Not destruction

(c) God as the Rock - Unchangeable stability

b. Habakkuk’s problem - 1:13-17

(1) How can a holy God use Chaldeans to punish Jews? - 1:13

(a) God’s Nature

i) You are of purer eyes than to behold evil

ii) That You cannot look on perverseness

(b) The problem: Wherefore

i) You look upon them that deal treacherously

ii) You hold Your peace when the wicked swallow up the man that is more righteous than he

(c) It is true that Judah is wicked - But the Chaldeans are even worse

(2) The Chaldean’s sinfulness - 1:14-16

(a) Nations have become like fish of the sea easily captured in the Babylonian net - 1:14-15

i) He makes men as the fishes of the sea

ii) As the creeping things that have no ruler over them

iii) He takes up all of them with the angle

iv) He catches them in his net
v) *He gathers them in his drag*

vi) The result: *Therefore*
   a) *He rejoices*
   b) *And is glad*

(b) But the glory is not given to God but to the net
(That is His Might - 1:11) - 1:16

i) The result: *Therefore*
   a) *He Sacrifices unto his net*
   b) *Burns incense unto his drag*

ii) The reason: *Because*
   a) *By them his portion is fat*
   b) *His food plenteous*

(3) The question: Will he be allowed to continue like this forever? - 1:17

(a) *Shall he therefore empty his net?*

(b) *And spare not to slay the nations continually?*

c. The prophet waits - 2:1

(1) The resolutions
   a) *I will stand upon my watch*
   b) *I will set me upon the tower* - The watchtower of the field
   c) He is willing to wait however long it may take

(2) The purpose: *I will look forth to see*
(a) *What He will speak with me*

(b) *What I shall answer concerning my complaint* - He desires an answer to his complaints

2. God’s Response: *And Jehovah answered me and said* - 2:2-20

a. The vision: יִּלֵּךְ - 2:2-3

(1) Its recording - 2:2

(a) *Write the vision*

(b) *Make it plain upon tablets* - To be inscribed plainly on tablets - Isaiah 8:1-2

(c) The reason: *That he may run that reads it* - Run to tell the message to others

(2) Its timing - 2:3

(a) *For the vision is yet the appointed time*

   i) The prophetic future

   ii) הָלַכְתָּלוֹ - Time fixed for fulfillment

(b) *It hastens toward the end* - To full fulfillment

(c) *It shall not lie* - It will come

(d) Regardless of how long it seems to delay - Wait for it

   i) Though it tarry - Wait for it

   ii) Because it will surely come - It will not delay

b. The message - 2:4-5
(1) The unrighteous one shall die because of his pride, but the just shall live by faith - 2:4

(a) The unrighteous: *Behold*

i) *His soul is puffed up*

ii) *It is not upright in him*

iii) To disbelieve God - Shows pride

   a) General principle

   b) In this context the subject would be the Babylonians

(b) The righteous

i) *But the righteous shall live by his faith*

ii) To believe God is to show: ἴσθι - Faith

iii) Habakkuk is primarily thinking of faith as a rule of life

   a) The Babylonians and the unrighteous Israelites do not live by faith

   b) Righteous Israel must learn to live and keep on living by faith – they must learn to trust God even when they cannot understand their present situation

   iv) The New Testament applies it to saving faith

(2) The sin of the Chaldeans carries the seed of their own destruction - 2:5
(a) Yea, moreover: Wine is treacherous - Characterized by drunkenness - 2:5a

i) Xenophon

ii) Herodotus

iii) Daniel Five

(b) Characterized by power hunger - 2:5b

i) A haughty man that keeps not at home - He leaves home to conquer

ii) He is like Sheol: Although all death go there - It is still not satisfied

a) He enlarges his desire as Sheol

b) He is as death - And cannot be satisfied

iii) No matter how many nations are conquered - Necessity for more

a) But gather unto him all nations

b) Heaps unto him all peoples

c. The taunt song against the Chaldeans - 2:6-20

1) The taunt - 2:6a

(a) Shall not all these take up a parable against him

(b) A taunting proverb against him

(c) The content: And say

2) The First Woe: The plundering Chaldeans plundered - 2:6b-8
(a) Chaldeans demanded tribute from conquered nations - 2:6

i) Woe unto him that increases that which is not his!

ii) How long? - And that lades him with pledges!

(b) They will be attacked by surprise - 2:7 (Medes and Persians)

i) Shall not they rise up suddenly that shall bite you?

ii) Awake that shall vex you?

iii) The result: You shall be booty unto them

(c) Reason: Because the remnant of conquered nations will now plunder the Chaldeans - 2:8

i) Because you have plundered many nations - All the remnant of the people shall plunder you

ii) Because of men’s blood

iii) For the violence done

a) To the land

b) To the city

c) To all that dwell therein

(3) The Second Woe: The dynastic building will collapse - 2:9-11

(a) Woe to him to him that gets an evil gain for his house - Tried to set up a long-lasting dynasty - 2:9
i) That he may set his nest on high

ii) That he may be delivered from the hand of evil

(b) Attempted by wholesale slaughter - 2:10

i) You have devised shame to your house - By cutting off many peoples

ii) You have sinned against your soul

(c) For now the parts of the building itself will witness against you - 2:11 (Reason)

i) For the stone shall cry out of the wall

ii) The beam out of the timber shall answer it

(4) The Third Woe: Violence with violence - 2:12-14

(a) Building city with blood of slaves - 2:12

i) Woe to him that builds a town with blood!

ii) Establishes a city by iniquity!

(b) All this labor is doomed to destruction by fire - 2:13

i) The source: Behold - Is it not of Jehovah of Hosts

ii) The result

a) That the people labor for the fire?

b) And the nations weary themselves for vanity?
(c) Reason: The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of Jehovah in the Kingdom - 2:14

i) The fact: *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of Jehovah*

ii) The comparison: *As the waters cover the sea*

(5) The Fourth Woe: Debauchery debauched - 2:15-17

(a) Chaldeans: Making others drink so as to get them to go naked - 2:15

i) The act

a) *Woe unto him that gives his neighbor drink*

b) *That adds to your venom*

ii) The purpose

a) *To make him drunk also*

b) *That you may look on their nakedness*

(b) Now Chaldeans will be forced to drink of the cup of Jehovah - 2:16

i) *You are filled with shame - Not glory – kalon*

ii) *Drink you also - Be as one uncircumcised*

a) They will be drunk with wrath

b) Their uncircumcision uncovered
(I) Unsaved hearts

(II) Non-Jewishness clearly seen

(iii) *The cup of Jehovah’s right hand shall come round unto you* - The cup of the wrath of God

(iv) The result: *Foul shame shall be upon your glory – kikalon*

(c) Reasons - 2:17 (Result of Babylonian drunkenness)

i) *For the violence done to Lebanon shall cover you* - Destruction of the forest kingdom

ii) *The destruction of the beasts which made them afraid* - Destruction of the animal kingdom

iii) Destruction of humanity

a) *Because of men’s blood*

b) *For the violence done*

(I) To the land

(II) To the city

(III) To all that dwell therein


(a) Its useless - 2:18

i) *What profit the graven image - That the maker thereof has graven it?*
ii) The molten image - Even the teachers of lies
   a) That he that fashions its form trusts therein?
   b) To make dumb idols?

(b) Its sinfulness - 2:19
   i) Woe unto him that says
      a) To the wood - Awake!
      b) To the dumb stone - Arise!
   ii) Shall this teach?
      a) Behold: It is overlaid with gold and silver
      b) There is no breadth at all in the midst of it

(c) Reason: Jehovah alone is God - 2:20
   i) But Jehovah is in His Holy Temple
   ii) Let all the earth keep silence before Him
   iii) This God has now spoken from His Holy Temple in Jerusalem – and what He decreed will come to pass
III. THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK - 3:1-19

A. The Heading: *A Prayer of Habakkuk the Prophet Set to Shigionoth* - 3:1

1. Victory prayer after receiving divine answer to dilemma
   a. *Shigionoth*: Used in cases of complete reliance on God’s fulfillment - Psalm 7:1
   b. Stringed instruments - Most likely a harp
      
      (1) Psalm 4:1
      (2) Psalm 6:1
      (3) Psalm 54:1
      (4) Psalm 55:1
      (5) Psalm 67:1
      (6) Psalm 76:1

2. Prayer is for God to fulfill final judgment for sin at Second Coming of the Messiah

3. Point: All injustices will be rectified by the Second Coming

B. The Request: Spoken by member of the Faithful Remnant - 3:2 (Poetic Analysis - A-B-B-A)

1. The Confession
   a. *O Jehovah: I have heard the report of You* - By the 144,000 and the Two Witnesses
   b. *And I am afraid* - More judgments to come

2. The Prayer
   a. *In the Midst of the Years: כבשון - In the Middle of Years*
(1) *O Jehovah: Revive your works in the midst of the years*

(2) *In the midst of the years make it known*

(3) Prayer is for the bowl judgments which will bring to an end the wrath of God

b. *In wrath remember mercy* - So there is no need for fear

C. The Second Coming of the Messiah - 3:3-15

1. Place - 3:3a
   a. *God came from Teman* - In Mount Seir in Edom north of Bozrah
   b. *The Holy One from Mount Paran* - South Negev across the Arabah form Mount Seir [selah]

2. The *Shechinah* Glory - 3:3b-4
   a. *His glory covered the heavens*
   b. *The earth was full of His praise*
   c. *His brightness was as the light*
   d. *He had rays coming forth from His hand*
   e. *And there was the hiding of His power*

3. The Glory was Destructive Against the Sinners - 3:5
   a. *Before him went the pestilence*
   b. *And fiery bolts went forth at His feet*

4. The Effects on the Nations - 3:6-7
   a. Driven asunder - 3:6
(1) He stood - And measured the earth

(2) He beheld - And drove asunder the nations

(3) The results

(a) The eternal mountains were scattered

(b) The everlasting hills did bow

d. Fear - 3:7

(1) I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction!

(2) The curtains of the Land of Midian did tremble

5. The Oath of God - 3:8-11

a. Was it against the waters that the judgment of the Second Coming came? - 3:8

(1) Was Jehovah displeased with the rivers?

(2) Was Your anger against the rivers?

(3) Or Your wrath against the sea?

(4) That You did ride upon Your horses?

(5) Upon Your chariots of salvation?

b. No: But God’s oath to save the Tribes of Israel - 3:9a

(1) Your bow was made quite bare

(2) The oaths to the tribes were a sure word [selah]

c. But the earth and water will be affected by the judgment - 3:9b-10

(1) You did cleave the earth with rivers
(2) *The mountains saw You - And were afraid*

(3) *The tempest of waters passed by*

(4) *The deep uttered its voice - And lifted up its hands on high*

d. So are the heavens - 3:11

(1) *The sun and moon stood still in their habitation*

(2) *At the light of Your arrows as they went*

(3) *At the shining of Your glittering spear*

6. The Campaign of Armageddon - 3:12-15

a. The marching and threshing of the nations - 3:12 (Isaiah 63:1-6)

(1) *You did march through the land in indignation!*

(2) *You did thresh the nations in anger!*

b. Reason: For the salvation of Israel - 3:13a

(1) *You went forth for the salvation of Your people*

(2) *For the salvation of Your anointed*

(3) Observations

(a) The ultimate answer to Habakkuk’s problem

(b) Gives purpose of this chapter

c. The fall of the Antichrist - 3:13b-14a

(1) *You wounded the head out of the house of the wicked man*

(2) *Laying bare the foundation even to the neck [selah]*
(3) **You did pierce with his own staves the head of his warriors**

d. The fall of the Gentile nations - 3:14b-15

(1) Their goal

(a) *They came as a whirlwind to scatter me*

(b) *Their rejoicing was to devour the poor secretly*

(2) God’s response

(a) *You did tread the sea with Your horses*

(b) *The heap of mighty water*

D. The Faith of the Faithful Remnant – 3:16-19

1. The Fear - 3:16

a. The message of the Campaign of Armageddon caused great fear

(1) *I heard - And my body trembled*

(2) *My lips quivered at the voice*

(3) *Rottenness entered into my bones - And I tremble in my place*

b. Reason: I must wait for the people who will invade us

(1) *Because I must wait quietly for the Day of Trouble*

(2) *For the coming up of the people that invade us*

2. The Faith - 3:17-19

a. Although fruit and flock are cut off - 3:17

(1) *For though the fig tree shall not flourish*
(2)  *Neither shall fruit be in the vines*

(3)  *The labor of the olive shall fail*

(4)  *And the fields shall yield no food*

(5)  *The flock shall be cut off from the fold*

(6)  *And there shall be no herd in the stalls*

b.  I will trust in the God of my salvation - 3:18

(1)  *Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah*

(2)  *I will joy in the God of my salvation*

c.  God will be given the victory - 3:19

(1)  *Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength*

(2)  *He makes my feet like hinds’ feet - Sure-footed*

(3)  *And makes me to walk upon my high places – Confidence of victory*

(4)  II Samuel 22:34

(5)  Psalm 18:3

E.  Subscription

1.  *For the Chief Musician*

2.  *For the stringed instruments*